

Building Relationships: Fostering Connections

Video Highlight

Narrator: Hello, and welcome to this short presentation on fostering connections. Learn about the importance of creating and sustaining positive relationships with the young children in your classroom and in your care. Fostering Connections is one in a series of presentations on building relationships with children. Let's see what it means to make these connections and establish relationships. Let's think about why these relationships are so important and start to learn some ways teachers can build lasting relationships with children.

The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning uses the house framework to describe the effective everyday practices that lead to school readiness for all children. There are four parts to the house framework: a foundation of engaging interactions and environments, the supporting pillars of research-based curricula and effective teaching practices as well as ongoing assessment, and highly individualized teaching practices that ensure that every child makes progress toward school readiness. This presentation focuses on the foundation of the house.

Teacher: [Speaking Spanish] How do you look when you are happy?

Narrator: Building positive relationships with children is the first step to creating an engaging learning environment. Building positive relationships, or fostering connections, means that teachers and other caring adults get to know each child on a personal level. And they demonstrate those connections in all sorts of ways that show real enjoyment. We see this when teachers smile and laugh with their children and when teachers show genuine enthusiasm for a child's interests, activities, and ideas.

Teacher: This is fantastic. Who made all this food?

Girl: We did!

Narrator: Why are positive relationships so important? The research is clear. Fostering warm and genuine emotional connections with the children in your classroom can lead to many positive outcomes. Young children who are emotionally connected to others are more likely to show positive developmental and learning in later years, outcomes like good social skills and greater initiative. Young children who are emotionally connected to others may show less negative behaviors such as aggression. And these relationships may buffer or protect young children from the adverse effects of a variety of stressors.

Teacher and children: ♪ All my friends are here with me. ♪

Narrator: How do teachers foster connections with the children in their classrooms and in their care? They get to know each child, their likes, their interests, and they learn about their families.

Girl: Miss Maria, look.

Teacher: Who is that?

Girl: My daddy.

Teacher: That's your daddy?

Narrator: Teachers show their interest by getting close and sharing activities and conversations, and teachers understand that it takes time to create connections that matter. Teachers foster connections throughout the day, day after day. It takes warm smiles and personal greetings.

Teacher: Good morning, Linda. I missed you yesterday. [Speaking Spanish] I missed you. I said, "Oh my goodness, where is my little Linda? She didn't come."

Narrator: It takes time to listen, to honor a child's language. It takes time to notice, to pay attention to a child's feelings. It takes time to share, to play with the same toys, or have a special conversation. It takes time to encourage, to respect each child's interests and efforts. This short presentation highlighted the importance of fostering connections in the early childhood classroom. Creating and sustaining positive relationships with every child sets the stage for better outcomes for school and life, and positive relationships make for a pleasant and productive learning environment for everyone.

Thank you for listening. We hope you extend on the great things you're already doing and put more of these ideas to work in your classroom. For more information and more examples, see the longer module, *Fostering Connections*, and check out the tips and tools and other resources.